

CLAIMS

1. A covering, for an access aperture, comprising at least a pair of cover plates, of unequal sizes, that are positionable one adjacent the other along a line of juxtaposition to define at least part of the covering, the larger of the said pair of cover plates including one or more primary strengthening members and at least a first, auxiliary strengthening member of the covering; and the smaller of the said pair of cover plates including a lesser number of primary strengthening members than the larger cover plate; or omitting a said primary strengthening member.
2. A covering according to Claim 1 wherein the smaller of the pair of cover plates includes one or more auxiliary strengthening members.
3. A covering according to Claim 1 or Claim 2 wherein the or each said strengthening member includes an elongate rib protruding from the in-use underside of a said cover plate.
4. A covering according to any preceding claim, wherein the larger cover plate of the said pair includes at least a pair of seats for supporting the said cover plate in a frame; and wherein the primary strengthening member substantially interconnects the said seats.
5. A covering according to any preceding claim, wherein the said primary strengthening member extends generally parallel to the said line of juxtaposition.
6. A covering according to any preceding claim, wherein the primary strengthening member lies closer to the said line of juxtaposition than to any other edge of the larger of the pair of cover plates.
7. A covering according to any preceding claim including three or more cover plates.

8. A covering according to Claim 7 including one or more further lines of juxtaposition along which at least one respective pair of cover plates are positionable one adjacent the other.
- 5 9. A covering according to any preceding claim the cover plates of which, when positioned one adjacent the other along one or more lines of juxtaposition as appropriate, define a rectangular covering.
- 10 10. A covering according to Claim 9 including a line of juxtaposition that is a straight line intersecting two adjacent sides of the rectangular covering defined by the cover plates.
11. A covering according to Claim 9 including a line of juxtaposition that intersects a diagonal of the rectangular covering.
- 15 12. A covering according to Claim 9 including a line of juxtaposition that is spaced from the diagonal, of the rectangular covering, that it is proximate.
- 20 13. A covering according to any preceding claim wherein the larger of the pair of cover plates includes two strengthening members; and the smaller of the pair includes a single strengthening member.
- 25 14. A covering according to any preceding claim including a connection securing the cover plates of the or a said pair one to the other.
15. A covering according to Claim 14 wherein the connection is a loose connection.
- 30 16. A covering according to Claim 14 wherein the connection permits pivoting of the plates along the line of juxtaposition.
17. A surface access assembly including a frame defining the boundary of an aperture; and a covering according to any preceding claim, the covering being

moveably receivable in the frame so as to permit closing and opening of the aperture.

18. An assembly according to Claim 17 including a hinge pivotably securing  
5 one of the said cover plates to the frame.

19. An assembly according to Claim 17 or Claim 18, wherein the frame and  
each said cover plate engage one another at three mutually spaced locations so as  
to define a non-rocking support for each cover plate.

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20. An access assembly according to Claim 17 when dependant from Claim 3,  
wherein the aperture is rectangular; and the direction of elongation of the primary  
strengthening member generally coincides with a diagonal of the rectangular  
aperture.

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